

PRESS RELEASE

STATE SENATOR DAN CLEMENS – 20TH DISTRICT



Room 418, State Capitol
Jefferson City, Mo 65101
Phone: 573-751-4008 Fax: 573-751-4096
Email: dan_clemens@senate.state.mo.us



Missouri Senate

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Weekly Capitol Report

JEFFERSON CITY- In a rare move, a handful of Democrats adjourned the Senate on Wednesday in an attempt to block majority Republicans from voting on tort reform. This move is a disgrace to the Senate, a disgrace to our constituents and blocks any effort to move ahead with the budget and other bills that will help Missouri and its citizens. We, as state senators, are here to do a job. We were elected to pass laws that benefit Missouri citizens and businesses. With these kinds of games, the trust our constituents put into our ability to serve them has been severely violated and broken.

Several Senate Democrats tried to prevent the tort reform vote over the past three days, talking at length about issues already discussed in the past, and then adjourning the chamber on Wednesday.

Despite childish games and tomfoolery we did manage to pass tort reform, and it now advances to the governor. This is a necessary and highly crucial bill, which if signed by the governor would keep doctors and businesses in Missouri, and will protect citizens and businesses in our state.

HB 1304 seeks to end the practice of “venue shopping” in which plaintiffs are allowed to file cases in areas known for awarding the large settlements when the case did not begin there.

The legislation seeks to limit joint and several liability. Rather than hold accountable those primarily responsible, this predatory practice allows full damages to be assessed against those found to have only a fraction of the total liability. In this case, the company that made the product could be held more liable than person who misused the product.

The measure also seeks to cap the payments for pain and suffering or noneconomic damages. The existing cap of \$565,000 would be lowered to \$450,000.

I am very proud that we were able to pull together and support this truly important legislation for Missouri.

As far as the \$18.83 billion budget plan is concerned, we resumed debate today, after Monday night's session which lasted well after midnight. We successfully passed the first two of the 12 budget bills funding public debt and schools, and are now concentrating on the last ten bills focusing on higher education, transportation, public health and social services to name a few.

As always, I appreciate your opinion on any legislative matter. If you have any questions or concerns to share, please call me at 1-866-242-0810, or email me at dan_clemens@senate.state.mo.us.

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